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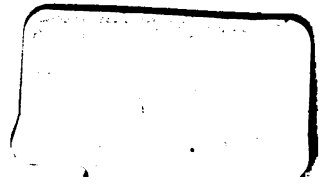

NBI
Taylor

THE CENTENNIAL ODE

BY

BAYARD TAYLOR

The Centennial Ode.

THE MEMORIAL FREEDOM POEM

BY

BAYARD TAYLOR

ILLUSTRATED.

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PUBLISHERS' PREFACE.

Bayard Taylor's Centennial Poem is the only work of the kind by a great American poet, designed especially as a Memorial Ode to be used for all time upon all occasions celebrating national events in our American history. Originally delivered by the author in commemoration of the Declaration of American Independence, there has hitherto been lacking an adequate occasion for its presentation to the public at a fitting and favorable time.

The Centennial of the Inauguration of General George Washington as President of the United States enables the publishers to offer Mr. Taylor's great national poem, as a popular souvenir of this memorable anniversary, in a form suitable for permanent preservation.

WOR 20JUN'34

[*The engravings are by* JOHN ANDREW & SON, A. BOBBETT, JOHN P. DAVIS, J. L. LANGRIDGE, J. T. SPEER, JOHN FILMER, F. JUENGLING, *and* RUSSELL & RICHARDSON.]

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THE
CENTENNIAL ODE.

A·F
J.H. DAVIS SC.

THE CLEFTS OF THE ROCKS.

THE CENTENNIAL ODE.

SUN of the stately Day,
Let Asia into the shadow drift,
Let Europe bask in thy ripened ray,
And over the severing ocean lift
A brow of broader splendor!
Give light to the eager eyes
Of the Land that waits to behold thee rise:
The gladness of morning lend her,
With the triumph of noon attend her,

And the peace of the vesper skies!
For lo! she cometh now
With hope on the lip and pride on the brow,
Stronger, and dearer, and fairer,
To smile on the love we bear her,—
To live, as we dreamed her and sought her,
Liberty's latest daughter!
In the clefts of the rocks, in the secret places,

We found her traces;
On the hills, in the crash of woods that fall,
We heard her call;
When the lines of battle broke,
We saw her face in the fiery smoke;
Through toil, and anguish, and desolation,
We followed, and found her
With the grace of a virgin Nation
As a sacred zone around her!

The National Ode.

Who shall rejoice
With a righteous voice,
Far-heard through the ages, if not she?
For the menace is dumb that defied her,
The doubt is dead that denied her,
And she stands acknowledged, and strong and free!

ASSUR'S MOUND.

Ah, hark! the solemn undertone
On every wind of human story blown.
A large, divinely-moulded Fate

The National Ode.

Questions the right and purpose of a State,
And in its plan sublime
Our eras are the dust of Time.
The far-off Yesterday of power
Creeps back with stealthy feet,
Invades the lordship of the hour,
And at our banquet takes the unbidden seat.

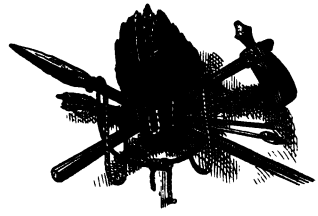
From all unchronicled and silent ages
Before the Future first begot the Past,

Till History dared, at last,
To write eternal words on granite pages;
From Egypt's tawny drift, and Assur's mound
And where, uplifted white and far,
Earth highest yearns to meet a star,
And Man his manhood by the Ganges found,—

The National Ode.

Imperial heads, of old millennial sway,
And still by some pale splendor crowned,
Chill as a corpse-light in our full-orbed day,
In ghostly grandeur rise
And say, through stony lips and vacant eyes:
"Thou that assertest freedom, power and fame,
Declare to us thy claim!"

THE RIVER-HEAD.



ON the shores of a Continent cast,
She won the inviolate soil
By loss of heirdom of all the Past,
And faith in the royal right of Toil!
She planted homes on the savage sod:
Into the wilderness lone
She walked with fearless feet,
In her hand the divining-rod,
Till the veins of the mountains beat
With fire of metal and force of stone!

She set the speed of the river-head
To turn the mills of her bread;

She drove her plowshare deep
Through the prairie's thousand-centuried sleep;

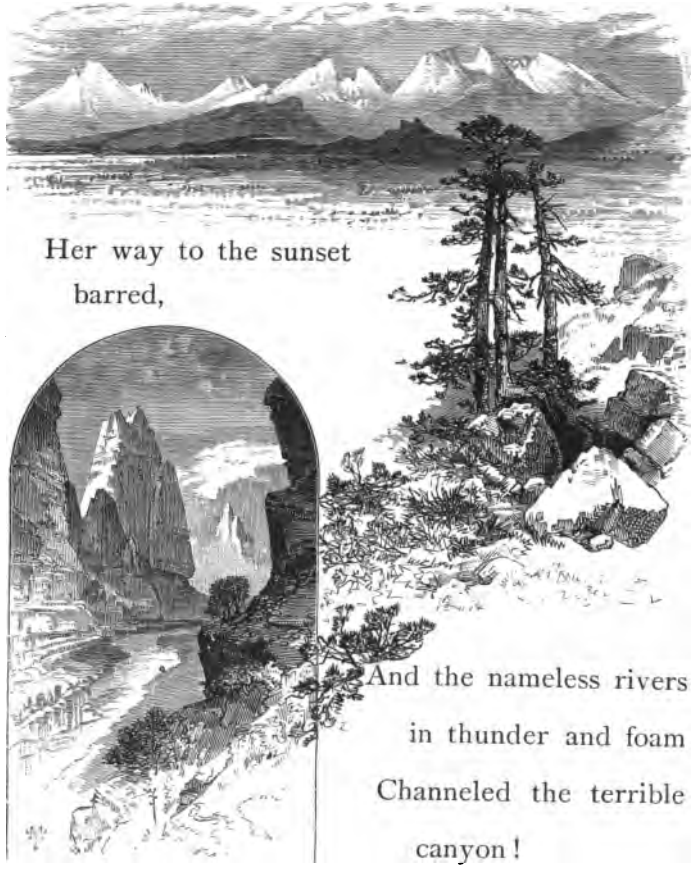
The National Ode.

To the South, and West, and North,

She called Pathfinder forth,

Her faithful and sole companion,

Where the flushed Sierra, snowy-starred,

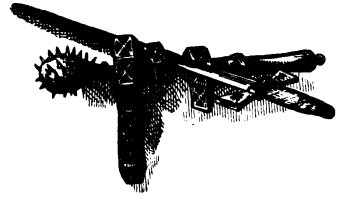


Her way to the sunset barred,

And the nameless rivers in thunder and foam Channeled the terrible canyon!

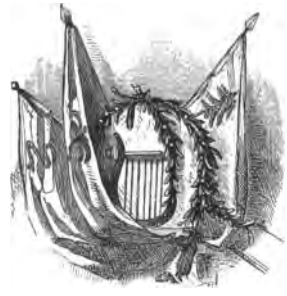
Nor paused, till her uttermost home
Was built, in the smile of a softer sky
And the glory of beauty still to be,
Where the haunted waves of Asia die
On the strand of the world-wide sea!

AS OVER EARTH THE SKIES.



THE race, in conquering,
Some fierce Titanic joy of conquest knows:
Whether in veins of serf or king,
Our ancient blood beats restless in repose.
Challenge of Nature unsubdued
Awaits not Man's defiant answer long;
For hardship, even as wrong,
Provokes the level-eyed, heroic mood.
This for herself she did; but that which lies,
As over earth the skies,

Blending all forms in one benignant glow,—
Crowned conscience, tender care,
Justice, that answers every bondman's prayer,
Freedom where faith may lead or Thought may dare,
The power of minds that know,
Passion of hearts that feel,
Purchased by blood and woe,
Guarded by fire and steel,—
Hath she secured? What blazon on her shield,
In the clear Century's light
Shines to the world revealed,
Declaring nobler triumph, born of Right?



THE CHOSEN OF HER SEED.

FORESEEN in the vision of sages,
Foretold when martyrs bled,
She was born of the longing of ages,
By the truth of the noble dead
And the faith of the living fed!
No blood in her lightest veins
Frets at remembered chains,
Nor shame of bondage has bowed her head.

In her form and features still
The unblenching Puritan will,
Cavalier honor, Huguenot grace,
The Quaker truth and sweetness,
And the strength of the danger-girdled race
Of Holland, blend in a proud completeness.
From the homes of all, where her being began,
She took what she gave to Man:
Justice, that knew no station,
Belief, as soul decreed,
Free air for aspiration,
Free force for independent deed!
She takes, but to give again,
As the sea returns the rivers in rain;
And gathers the chosen of her seed
From the hunted of every crown and creed.
Her Germany dwells by a gentler Rhine;
Her Ireland sees the old sunburst shine;
Her France pursues some dream divine;

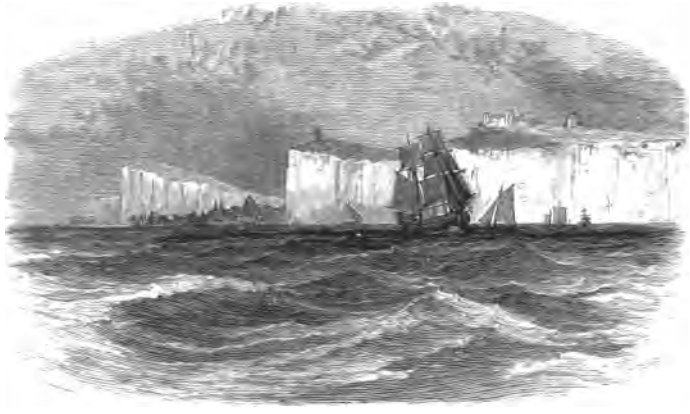
Her Norway keeps his mountain pine;

Her Italy waits by the western brine;

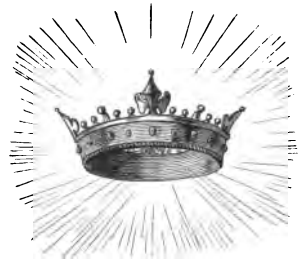
And, broad-based under all,

Is planted England's oaken-hearted mood,

As rich in fortitude
As e'er went worldward from the island-wall!
Fused in her candid light,
To one strong race all races here unite:
Tongues melt in hers, hereditary foemen
Forget their sword and slogan, kith and clan;
'Twas glory, once, to be a Roman;
She makes it glory, now, to be a Man!



BOW TO THE GREATER.



Bow down!
Doff thine æonian crown!
One hour forget
The glory, and recall the debt:
Make expiation,
Of humbler mood,
For the pride of thine exultation
O'er peril conquered and strife subdued!
But half the right is wrested
When victory yields her prize,
And half the marrow tested
When old endurance dies.
In the sight of them that love thee,
Bow to the Greater above thee!
He faileth not to smite,
The idle ownership of Right,

Nor spares to sinews fresh from trial
And virtue schooled in long denial,
The tests that wait for thee
In larger perils of prosperity.
Here, at the Century's awful shrine,
Bow to thy Fathers' God—and thine!

BESIDE THESE HOLY WALLS.

BEHOLD! she bendeth now,

Humbling the chaplet of her hundred years:

There is a solemn sweetness on her brow,

And in her eyes are sacred tears.
Can she forget,
In present joy, the burden of her debt,
When for a captive race
She grandly staked and won
The total promise of her power begun,
And bared her bosom's grace
To the sharp wound that inly tortures yet?
Can she forget
The million graves her young devotion set,
The hands that clasp above
From either side, in sad, returning love?
Can she forget,
Here, where the Ruler of to-day,
The Citizen of to-morrow,
And equal thousands to rejoice and pray
Beside these holy walls are met,
Her birth-cry, mixed of keenest bliss and sorrow?
Where, on July's immortal morn
Held forth, the People saw her head

And shouted to the world: "The King is dead,
But lo! the Heir is born!"
When fire of Youth, and sober trust of Age,
In Farmer, Soldier, Priest, and Sage,
Arose and cast upon her
Baptismal garments,—never robes so fair
Clad prince in Old-world air,—
Their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor!

PANTHEON OF THE PAST.

ARISE! Recrown thy head,

Radiant with blessing of the Dead!

The National Ode.

Bear from this hallowed place
The prayer that purifies thy lips,
The light of courage that defies eclipse,
The rose of Man's new morning on thy face!
Let no iconoclast
Invade thy rising Pantheon of the Past,
To make a blank where Adams stood,
To touch the Father's sheathed and sacred blade,
Spoil crowns on Jefferson and Franklin laid,
Or wash from Freedom's feet the stain of Lincoln's blood!
Hearken, as from that haunted hall
Their voices call:
"We lived and died for thee:
We greatly dared that thou might'st be;
So, from thy children still
We claim denials which at last fulfill,
And freedom yielded to preserve thee free!
Beside clear-hearted Right
That smiles at Power's uplifted rod,

Plant Duties that requite,

And Order that sustains, upon thy sod,

And stand in stainless might

Above all self, and only less than God!"

I.N.R.I.

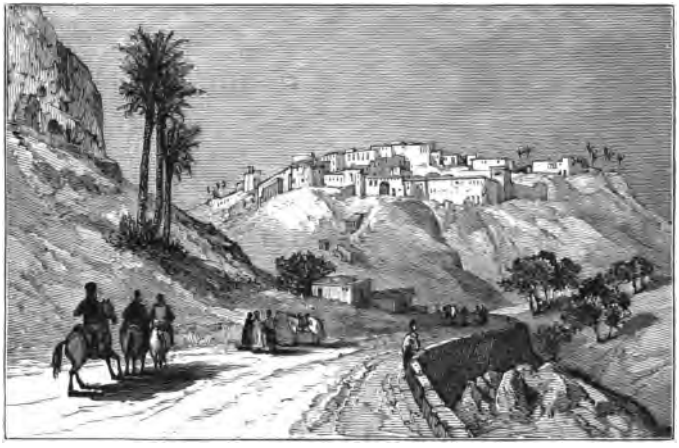
THE BRINKS OF DANGER.

HERE may thy solemn challenge end,
All-proving Past, and each discordance die

Of doubtful augury,
Or in one choral with the Present blend,

And that half-heard, sweet harmony
Of something nobler that our sons may see!
Though poignant memories burn
Of days that were, and may again return,
When thy fleet foot, O Huntress of the Woods,
The slippery brinks of danger knew,
And dim the eyesight grew
That was so sure in thine old solitudes,—
Yet stays some richer sense
Won from the mixture of thine elements,
To guide the vagrant scheme,
And winnow truth from each conflicting dream!
Yet in thy blood shall live
Some force unspent, some essence primitive,
To seize the highest use of things;
For Fate, to mold thee to her plan,
Denied thee food of kings,
Withheld the udder and the orchard-fruits,
Fed thee with savage roots,
And forced thy harsher milk from barren breasts of man!

FAIR AS MORNING.



O SACRED Woman-Form,
Of the first people's need and passion wrought,—
No thin, pale ghost of Thought,
But fair as Morning and as heart's-blood warm,—
Wearing thy priestly tiar on Judah's hills;
Clear-eyed beneath Athenè's helm of gold;
Or from Rome's central seat
Hearing the pulses of the Continents beat

In thunder where her legions rolled;
Compact of high heroic hearts and wills,
Whose being circles all
The selfless aims of men, and all fulfills;
Thyself not free, so long as one is thrall;

Goddess, that as a Nation lives,
And as a Nation dies,
That for her children as a man defies,
And to her children as a mother gives,—
Take our fresh fealty now!

No more a Chieftainess, with wampum-zone
And feather-cinctured brow,—.

No more a new Britannia, grown
To spread an equal banner to the breeze,

And lift thy trident o'er the double seas;
But with unborrowed crest,
In thine own native beauty dressed,—
The front of pure command, the unflinching eye,
thine own!

THE OAK AND THE ROSE.

913604A

LOOK up, look forth, and on!

There's light in the dawning sky:

The clouds are parting, the night is gone:

The National Ode.

Prepare for the work of the day!
Fallow thy pastures lie
And far thy shepherds stray,
And the fields of thy vast domain
Are waiting for purer seed

Of knowledge, desire, and deed,
For keener sunshine and mellower rain!
But keep thy garments pure:
Pluck them back, with the old disdain,
From touch of the hands that stain!

So shall thy strength endure.
Transmute into good the gold of Gain,
Compel to beauty thy ruder powers,

Till the bounty of coming hours
Shall plant, on thy fields apart,
With the oak of Toil, the rose of Art!
Be watchful, and keep us so:
Be strong, and fear no foe:
Be just, and the world shall know!
With the same love love us, as we give;
And the day shall never come,
That finds us weak or dumb
To join and smite and cry
In the great task, for thee to die,
And the greater task, for thee to live.

JAN 13 1938